

Kansas Department of Labor

Podcast Episode 11: More questions on filing an initial claim and general eligibility

Jonathan: Hello there and welcome to *Questions from Claimants*, the podcast about all things unemployment. Each episode we'll speak with unemployment experts from the Kansas Department of Labor to help answer your questions about your benefits. I'm your host Jonathan Larance.

We've received a lot of questions about filing an initial claim and general unemployment eligibility, so we decided to do another episode to answer more of your questions on this very important topic. To get your questions answered I spoke with Chastity Dexter, a Public Service Administrator for the Kansas Department of Labor.

Jonathan: Chastity, thanks for joining us today.

Chastity: Sure.

Jonathan: Why am I required to explain why I lost my job when filing for unemployment benefits?

Chastity: Well, each time you become unemployed and apply for benefits, you must provide a reason why you are unemployed on your application. If you are unemployed for any reason other than lack of work, which is typically referred to as a layoff, the reason you lost your job may have a bearing on whether you receive your benefits.

Jonathan: Can I get benefits if I quit or left my job voluntarily?

Chastity: You are not eligible for unemployment benefits if you voluntarily quit your job without good cause. If you leave voluntarily, you will not become eligible for benefits again until you become re-employed and have insured earnings of three times your weekly benefit amount. However, there are a few special circumstances that you might be able to collect benefits when you leave your job voluntarily. You can find a full list of these circumstances at our Web site at www.getkansasbenefits.com in our "Eligibility and Disqualifications," under the Frequently Asked Questions section.

Jonathan: Chastity, what if I was fired?

Chastity: You are not eligible for unemployment benefits if you are discharged, or fired, for misconduct. If you are fired, you will not become eligible again until you become re-employed and have earnings of at least three times your weekly benefit amount.

Jonathan: Chastity, what if I refuse a job?

Chastity: You would not be eligible for unemployment benefits if you fail without good cause to apply for or accept suitable work when offered by an employer or the Workforce Center.

Jonathan: Can I get benefits if I am attending school?

Chastity: Under certain circumstances, classes or training may be certified as “approved training,” allowing you to still receive benefits while in school. More details can be found on our Web site under the “Approved Training” in the Frequently Asked Questions section.

Jonathan: And as a note to our listeners, we plan on addressing more of your approved training questions in a future episode, so please send us questions if you have them. Now, if I’m working both a full-time job and a part-time job, and I get laid off from my full-time job, can I still get unemployment benefits?

Chastity: It is possible and I would suggest that you file an application. If you are working less than 40 hours a week and making less than your weekly benefit amount, it may be possible to draw partial benefits while you are seeking full-time employment.

Jonathan: What is the maximum amount I can receive for unemployment?

Chastity: The maximum weekly benefit amount is \$436 per week, which means even if someone was making over \$200,000 a quarter the weekly benefit amount would still be \$436.

Jonathan: Okay. Sometimes I can get confused with some of the jargon that comes with unemployment. What does it mean when I get a form that says “your claim is not entitled”?

Chastity: Not entitled means that your wages in the base period, which are the quarters that we’re using to determine your entitlement, are insufficient to meet the criteria under Kansas law to have a claim.

Jonathan: What are some of the reasons I can be denied benefits?

Chastity: You can be denied benefits if you are not able and immediately available to accept work; if you have a medical condition that prevents you from seeking or accepting work immediately; if you are not a U.S. citizen and do not have legal work authorization. There are things that can prevent you from receiving unemployment benefits. A full list can be found in our “Eligibility and Disqualifications” under the Frequently Asked Questions section on our Web site.

Jonathan: Now, I have exhausted all three tiers of my Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) and my State Extended Benefits (EB). Other states have a Tier IV of EUC. Will there be a Tier IV for Kansas?

Chastity: Currently Tier IV of EUC is only available in states where the unemployment rate has averaged 8.5 percent or more over a three-month period. At this time, Kansas’ unemployment rate is below 8.5 percent so we don’t qualify to offer the Tier IV benefits. We are not aware at this time of any efforts to add any additional tiers to the EUC program. So, once you’ve exhausted all of your EUC benefits and your State Extended Benefits there are no additional benefits at this time. However, for the latest information about unemployment and the EUC updates check out the “latest updates” section at the Web site www.GetKansasBenefits.com.

Jonathan: Chastity, thanks for joining me today.

Chastity: You’re welcome.

Jonathan: That’s it for this episode of *Questions from Claimants*. Join us next time when we’ll answer questions about the unemployment insurance debit card.

If you have general questions about the Kansas Unemployment process, e-mail us at podcast@dol.ks.gov. For security reason, we can't answer specific questions about your claim, but we may be able to answer general questions in an upcoming episode. Also, remember to go online to www.GetKansasBenefits.com for more information.

I'm Jonathan Larance. Thanks for listening.